

Claims

- 1 **Claim 1.** A cat toy apparatus, comprising:
- 2 a base having a hollow interior;
- 3 a motor-supporting structure having a central axis and a hollow
- 4 interior extending along the central axis, which motor-supporting
- 5 structure is connected to the base and so arranged that with the base
- 6 resting on a horizontal support surface, the motor-supporting
- 7 structure extends upwardly from the base with the central axis
- 8 disposed vertically;
- 9 an electric motor located within the hollow interior of the
- 10 motor-supporting structure in alignment with the central axis;
- 11 a object-holding arm connected to the motor, the object-holding
- 12 arm including an elongated member having a proximal end portion
- 13 connected to the motor and a distal end portion disposed upwardly
- 14 and radially outwardly from the motor-supporting structure;
- 15 a cat-attracting object;
- 16 a flexible line connecting the cat-attracting object to the distal
- 17 end portion of the object-holding arm; and
- 18 means for powering the electric motor in order to rotate the
- 19 object-holding arm and thereby move the cat-attracting object about
- 20 the motor-supporting structure.

1 **Claim 2.** A cat toy apparatus as recited in claim 1, wherein the
2 means for powering the electric motor includes an electronic circuit
3 located within the hollow interior of the base.

1 **Claim 3.** A cat toy apparatus as recited in claim 2, wherein the
2 electronic circuit is adapted to function as means for enabling a user
3 to select a running time after which the electric circuit automatically
4 turns the electric motor off.

1 **Claim 4.** A cat toy apparatus as recited in claim 2, wherein the
2 electronic circuit is adapted to function as means for enabling a user
3 to select a speed at which the electric motor operates.

1 **Claim 5.** A cat toy apparatus as recited in claim 2, wherein the
2 electronic circuit is adapted to function as means for automatically
3 reversing motor direction at various times.

1 **Claim 6.** A cat toy apparatus as recited in claim 2, wherein the
2 electronic circuit is adapted to function as means for detecting an
3 animal in close proximity to the apparatus in order to automatically
4 turn the electronic circuit on and power the electric motor when the
5 presence of an animal is so detected.

1 **Claim 7.** A cat toy apparatus as recited in claim 1, wherein:

2 the means for powering the electric motor includes a
3 battery-powered electronic circuit located within the hollow interior of
4 the base;

5 the electronic circuit is adapted to function as means for
6 enabling a user to select a running time after which the electric
7 circuit automatically turns the electric motor off;

8 the electronic circuit is adapted to function as means for
9 enabling a user to select a speed at which the electric motor
10 operates; and

11 the electronic circuit is adapted to function as means for
12 automatically reversing motor direction at various time intervals.

1 **Claim 8.** A cat toy apparatus as recited in claim 7, wherein the
2 electronic circuit includes means for detecting an animal in close
3 proximity to the apparatus in order to automatically turn the electronic
4 circuit on and power the electric motor when the presence of an
5 animal is so detected.

1 **Claim 9.** A cat toy apparatus as recited in claim 2, wherein:
2 the base includes an upper side;
3 the electronic circuit includes a circuit-controlling knob; and
4 the base includes cat-ear-depicting graphics, cat-eye-depicting
5 graphics, and cat-whisker-depicting graphics on the upper side that
6 combine with the circuit-controlling knob to depict a cat face for
7 which cat face the circuit-controlling knob depicts a cat nose.

1 **Claim 10.** A cat toy apparatus as recited in claim 1, further
2 comprising at least four base-stabilizing members on the base that
3 are rotatable by a user from deployed positions, in which the
4 base-stabilizing members extend outwardly from the base, to
5 storage positions in which the base-stabilizing members are
6 retracted from the deployed positions.

1 **Claim 11.** A cat toy apparatus as recited in claim 1, wherein:
2 the motor includes a rigid shaft extending upwardly and radially
3 outwardly from the motor-supporting structure to a terminal end
4 portion of the rigid shaft;
5 the proximal end portion of the elongated member is adapted
6 to be removably attached to the terminal end portion of the rigid shaft

7 in slide-on engagement of the terminal end portion in order to
8 facilitate replacement of the object-holding arm.

1 **Claim 12.** A cat toy apparatus, comprising:

2 a base having a hollow interior;

3 a motor-supporting structure having a central axis and a hollow
4 interior extending along the central axis, which motor-supporting
5 structure is connected to the base and so arranged that with the base
6 resting on a horizontal support surface, the motor-supporting
7 structure extends upwardly from the base with the central axis
8 disposed vertically;

9 an electric motor located within the hollow interior of the
10 motor-supporting structure in alignment with the central axis;

11 a object-holding arm connected to the motor, the object-holding
12 arm including an elongated member having a proximal end portion
13 connected to the motor and a distal end portion disposed upwardly
14 and radially outwardly from the motor-supporting structure;

15 a cat-attracting object;

16 a flexible line connecting the cat-attracting object to the distal
17 end portion of the object-holding arm; and

18 means for powering the electric motor in order to rotate the
19 object-holding arm and thereby move the cat-attracting object about
20 the motor-supporting structure;

21 said means for powering the electric motor including a
22 battery-powered electronic circuit located within the hollow interior of
23 the base such that the electronic circuit is adapted to function as
24 means for enabling a user to select a running time after which the
25 electric circuit automatically turns the electric motor off, means for
26 enabling the user to select a speed at which the electric motor
27 operates, and means for automatically reversing motor direction at
28 various time intervals;

29 said motor including a rigid shaft extending upwardly and
30 radially outwardly from the motor-supporting structure to a terminal
31 end portion of the rigid shaft, the object-holding arm including a
32 slender, plastic wand, and the slender plastic wand is adapted to be
33 removable attached to the terminal end portion of the rigid shaft in
34 slide-on engagement of the terminal end portion in order to facilitate
35 replacement of the object-holding arm; and

36 the apparatus further comprising at least four base-stabilizing
37 members on the base that are adapted to be rotated from deployed
38 positions, in which the base-stabilizing members extend outwardly
39 from the base, to storage positions in which the base-stabilizing
40 members are retracted from the deployed positions.

1 **Claim 13.** A cat toy apparatus, comprising:

2 a support structure having a central axis, which support
3 structure is adapted to rest upon a horizontal support surface with the
4 central axis disposed vertically;

5 a motor assembly on the support structure, including an
6 electric motor and an electronic circuit for powering the electric
7 motor;

8 an elongated member having a proximal end portion that is
9 connected to the electric motor and a distal end portion that is
10 disposed upwardly from the motor and radially outwardly from the
11 central axis;

12 a flexible line connected to the distal end portion of the
13 elongated member, the flexible line having a terminal end; and

14 an object connected to the terminal end of the flexible line;

15 wherein the motor assembly is adapted to function as means
16 for rotating the elongated member in order to thereby move the object
17 about the central axis of the support structure for purposes of
18 attracting the attention of an animal.